Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my

disappointment with President Bush's veto of the Iraq Accountability

Act. Sadly, this is just the latest example of the President's

unwillingness to change his mistaken policy towards Iraq. After more

than 4 years of the President's stay-the-course strategy in Iraq, we

must provide a responsible plan to redeploy our troops and require the

Iraqi government to meet basic benchmarks for stability. This bill

presented that plan and the President should have signed it into law.

Last month, 4 years after the President declared ``Mission

Accomplished,'' was the deadliest month for American troops in Iraq

this year. For too long, the Republican-led Congress failed to exercise

its Constitutional responsibility to hold the Bush Administration

accountable--with disastrous results for the American people. No

longer.

I have opposed the war in Iraq since its start, and today with my

vote to override the veto I was proud to vote once again to take our

policy in Iraq in a new direction. More than 4 years after the

President declared the end of major combat in Iraq, we suffered over

100 U.S. military casualties in April alone. We must provide a

responsible plan to redeploy our troops and require the Iraqi

government to meet basic benchmarks for stability.

Our country faces serious threats. There are dangerous people in this

world that seek nothing more than to kill as many Americans as

possible. The number of people who died from my district on September

11th make me acutely aware of this dire threat. I was proud to vote for

a bill that allows us to refocus our military on that threat. That

would allow us to seek out, capture, or kill those who were responsible

for September 11th or who currently plot to kill Americans rather than

police a civil war in Iraq.

I'm disappointed that the President chose to ignore the American

people and veto the Iraq Accountability Act. He should have signed this

bill, in order to get these needed resources to our troops and our

veterans, hold the Iraqi government accountable, change course in Iraq

and refocus on destroying Al Qaeda.

As we move forward, the President must realize that this Congress is

not going to give the President a blank check with which to ignore the

will of the American people on Iraq. Four years of a flawed strategy

are 4 years too long.